

Testimony on: HB1323 Education – Public Schools – Asian American History Teacher Professional Development and Resources
Committees: Ways and Means
Position: Favorable

1 March 2025

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and the members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Ethan and I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1323, a bill that would focus on allocating existing professional development time for educators to receive training on teaching Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history. As a former student of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) who now attends a private school in Washington, D.C. I can personally speak to the impact it would have on students like myself to have greater AAPI history education.

Growing up in MCPS, I rarely saw Asian American history meaningfully integrated into my curriculum. While I learned about the major moments in American history, we never seemed to talk about the contributions and struggles of Asian Americans. It wasn't until I transferred to my current school that I was introduced to figures like Mary Tape, who fought for her daughter's right to attend public school in 19th-century California; or Wong Kim Ark, whose landmark Supreme Court case cemented birthright citizenship for generations of Americans. Learning about these stories made me feel visible and connected to American history in a way that I never had before.

Asian Americans have been an afterthought in history class for far too long, even though our community has had a deep and complex role in constructing this nation. Without proper training, many educators may not have the resources to integrate AAPI history into their teaching. By passing HB 1323 to include dedicated professional development for AAPI history, we can ensure that students in MCPS—one of the most diverse school systems in the nation—receive a more complete and inclusive education.

This is not simply an issue of representation, but an issue of creating a more educated and empathetic student population. Understanding the Chinese Exclusion Act, the struggles of Filipino laborers, and the resilience of Japanese Americans in the face of internment teaches all students the importance of justice, activism, and civil rights. It prepares them to engage in the world as educated and thoughtful citizens.

I hope you will stand with me and many others in supporting HB 1323. Our educators are the key to delivering a more inclusive history curriculum, and they need the training to do so effectively. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ethan Huang